

ATTACHMENT C

Amendments to the Claims

Please cancel claims 1-16 without prejudice or disclaimer.

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application.

1-16. (Canceled)

17. (New) A film folding and supplying apparatus for machines for packaging products with stretchable film, said apparatus comprising:

pleating means placed between a feeding bobbin of film and a wrapping station, for folding a portion of film with the folds oriented in a traveling direction of the film, to thereby modify the width of the film in such a manner that the edges of the film on the bottom of the product, during a normal working cycle of the packaging machine, do not laterally project from the bottom of the product, said pleating means further comprising:

an elongate, flat and fixed guide having longitudinal edges with projecting rows of flat, idle and wheels with rounded edges, which provide edges of the guide to co-operate with the film with rolling friction, and

respective lateral guides to said row of wheels of said fixed guide, having projecting, respective rows of flat, idle and wheels with rounded edges,

whereby wheels of the fixed guide cooperate with wheels of the lateral guides to partially fold the film.

18. (New) The film folding and supplying apparatus of claim 17, wherein the pleating means is further for forming a substantially omega transversal section in the film.

19. (New) The film folding and supplying apparatus of claim 17, wherein the pleating means is adjustable to accommodate films of at least two different widths and to pleat the film with a width proportionate to one of the two different ranges of medium-small products and large products which can be packaged by a single machine.

20. (New) The film folding and supplying apparatus of claim 17, further comprising means for the adjusting of the pleating means so that the pleating means can pleat the film with a width which is proportionate to a smaller width of a product to be packaged of the two different ranges of medium-small products and large products packageable by a single machine.

21. (New) The film folding and supplying apparatus of claim 17, wherein the longitudinal edges of the fixed guide are slightly upwardly bent, in such a manner that the rows of wheels rotatably placed on the edges form an upwardly concave sliding surface, so that a medial portion of the film in a folding phase does not touch the upper face of said wheels.

22. (New) The film folding and supplying apparatus of claim 17, wherein the longitudinal and internal edges of the lateral guides, are slightly downwardly bent, so that the rows of wheels rotatably assembled upon said edges form a downwardly convex sliding surface, so that the edges of the folded film do not touch the lower face of said wheels.

23. (New) The film folding and supplying apparatus of claim 17, wherein the fixed guide is provided in a terminal and posterior portion of its lateral edges, with plates having rounded-edges made with suitable low-friction coefficient material, which with an external side are in a substantial tangency condition with a peripheral and active portion of a last folding wheels carried by the same lateral edges of the fixed guide to permit the plates act together to fold and guide the film in a correct manner during a folding phase.

24. (New) The film folding and supplying apparatus of claim 17, wherein the fixed guide with the rows of lateral wheels is fixed with its center line upon projections carried by a longitudinal member of an underlying ribbed and a cross-support, said longitudinal member being fixed with one end, and in projecting manner, to a traverse member which supports a distributor of the film and being downwardly inclined with the other end which is projecting for a portion from an anterior end of said fixed guide, under which there is fixed, on a central line, a support which is rotatably supporting in front of said fixed guide and transverse to this, a double roller having the same width of the sliding track made by the wheels of said fixed guide and upon which the film slides before reaching on said wheels.

25. (New) The film folding and supplying apparatus of claim 24, wherein the anterior end of said longitudinal member of the support which supports the guide, ends with a fork conformation to support rotatably free, a central roller and consecutively to this, a couple of lateral and equal rollers angularly spaced from the central roller of about

8-10°, in such a manner to form a convex shape which is transferred to the film before reaching the pleating means, to maintain the film stretched in a transverse direction.

26. (New) The film folding and supplying apparatus of claim 17, wherein the lateral guides are reinforced by suitably ribs and carry intermediate appendices, said lateral guides having slots transverse to the path of the film and through which screws are disposed for fixing said lateral guides on the flat ends of arms of a cross-support, in such a manner that it is possible to adjust the distance between the lateral guides with a variation which is equal to the length of said slots.

27. (New) The film folding and supplying apparatus of claim 26, wherein the flat ends of the arms of the cross-support are provided with a pair of threaded holes having a different distance from a longitudinal member of the said cross-support and in said holes may be screwed the fixing screws for the lateral guides, in such a manner that said guides may be adjusted in a reciprocal distance, in addition to pitch resulting from the length of said slots, also with the pitch given by the distance between the pair of threaded holes.

28. (New) The film folding and supplying apparatus of claim 24, wherein the end of the longitudinal member of the cross-support, which is fixed to the traverse member for supporting a film distributor, is enlarged and rotatably supports an intermediate portion of a shaft which is horizontal and transverse to the path of the film, upon which there are fixed rubber rollers, whereby upon said fixed rubber rollers, the lateral edges of the film

slide as film which is coming out from the pleating means, the film being pushed against said rollers by means of an overhanging parallel roller which via utilization of freewheels, is freely rotatable only in the running direction of the film and not in an opposite direction.

29. (New) The film folding and supplying apparatus of claim 24, wherein the traverse member which supports, in a projecting manner, the cross-support with the pleating means, has rounded edges and is disposed at a level that upon said cross-support, the folded film can run, said traverse member being provided on the posterior front for the exit of the film and on the upper wall, with a recess in which there is fixed a jaw with an upper portion comb, with teeth opened and oriented accordingly to the running direction of the folded film and upstream of said jaw and parallel to the jaw, said traverse member being provided with a recess having a length which is the same as that of said jaw, which houses in a condition of non-projection, a rubber insert with longitudinal grooves and being provided so that the same traverse member is provided at the level of the ends of said jaw, with recesses housing electromagnets for the closure of a film distributor of the film inferiorly formed.

30. (New) The film folding and supplying apparatus of claim 29, further comprising:
a complementary comb formed in a lower portion of a traverse with an L lateral shape, superior to the upper portion comb, said complementary comb suitably ribbed at least at the ends which are fulcrumed on an axle which is parallel to the longitudinal axis of said complementary comb and which passes by a point of the teeth of the same

comb, the traverse member being provided at the ends with appendices which transversally extend in the running direction of the film and beyond the point of the teeth of its comb, upon which appendices there operate elastic means which push said appendices against lower and adjustable retainers, in such a manner to maintain the comb of the distributor raised from the complementary comb and to maintain a strip of rubber upwardly fixed on the lower face of the same upper comb, raised and distant from the opposed rubber insert of the lower jaw of the same distributor, and

outside of the comb of the jaw, ferromagnetic disks inferiorly disposed and opposed to the electromagnets which, when are energized, attract said disks and the comb, in order to stop the film between the strips of rubber of the two combs of the distributor.

31. (New) The film folding and supplying apparatus of claim 30, further comprising energization means for the electromagnets to supply a variable energization according to a pre-established program which provides a loosening of a clamping of the film in a working phases of a packaging machine.